55 YEARS OF YOUR TRUST
HAROON OILS LIMITED
Producers of quality automotive and industrial lubricants.
Head Office: 021-32314066-8 Regional Office: 042-35757759
email: hol@haroonoils.com | www.haroonoils.com

DAWN

55 YEARS OF YOUR TRUST
HAROON OILS LIMITED
Producers of quality automotive and industrial lubricants.
Head Office: 021-32314066-8 Regional Office: 042-35757759
email: hol@haroonoils.com | www.haroonoils.com

Shehbaz urged to intervene over AJK 'accord violations'

• JAAC accuses govt of repeatedly violating agreement signed after deadly protests • Compensation promised to families of protest victims remains incomplete; FIRs against activists, civilians 'not withdrawn'; travel restrictions continue to affect youth seeking jobs abroad

By Tariq Naqash

MUZAFFARABAD: The Jammu and Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) has accused the government of violating a landmark agreement signed in October last year and has urged Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to intervene, citing serious delays in implementation and expressing concern over the induction of a "controversial figure" into the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) ahead of the upcoming elections in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK).

In an open letter addressed to the prime minister on Saturday, the JAAC said the agreement was signed on October 3–4, 2025, following deadly protests in late September that claimed several lives. A high-powered delegation from Islamabad, dispatched on the premier's directives, had visited Muzaffarabad and concluded what the committee described as a historic accord, reassuring the people of AJK of Pakistan's commitment to safeguarding their legitimate rights.

However, the committee alleged that the agreement had been repeatedly breached. It pointed out that the final clause required meetings of the negotiating committee to be held every 15 days, followed by the issuance of an official communiqu . Over the subsequent three months, however, only two meetings were held, on October 21 and November 4. A third meeting scheduled for January 5 this year was boycotted by the JAAC.

The committee also highlighted delays and shortcomings in the implementation of the Health Card Scheme. Although funds were released after a delay of more than 100 days, many major local hospitals in AJK were not included in the State Life Insurance Corporation's panel. This, it said, would force even poor patients to travel to Rawalpindi or Islamabad for treatment, undermining the utility of the scheme.

Referring to compensation for victims of the protests, the JAAC said the agreement promised financial compensation equivalent to law enforcement allowances for those killed on October 1 and 2, Rs1 million for each gunshot injury, and a government job for a family member of each deceased person within 20 days.

"However, this clause has yet to be fully implemented, which amounts to a serious breach of the agreement," the letter stated.

The committee further said that FIRs registered against JAAC members and members of the public between May 9, 2023, and October 4, 2025, were to be withdrawn under the agreement, but the issue remained unresolved. It added that young people continued to face difficulties in obtaining police character certificates, while several individuals seeking employment abroad had been offloaded from flights and arrested after being placed on exit and passport control lists, causing financial losses and mental distress.

The JAAC also accused the authorities of violating another clause calling for the formation of a high-powered committee to review the issue of AJK Assembly members elected from constituencies outside the territory. It said the committee's formation had been unjustifiably delayed, while MLAs elected on refugee seats were granted parliamentary privileges and standing committee positions. The committee further alleged that non-residents continued to be admitted to educational institutions under refugee quotas, in violation of the agreement.

Expressing alarm over political developments ahead of the forthcoming AJK elections, the JAAC strongly criticised the PML-N for inducting Saqib Majeed, whom it accused of opening fire on peaceful protesters in Muzaffarabad on September 29, 2025, killing three people and injuring dozens. The committee said the incident had triggered widespread protests and clashes across AJK, resulting in further loss of life.

It noted that Mr Majeed, the son-in-law of Muslim Conference chief Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan and a former chief organiser of the party, was now being given political cover by the PML-N, a move it said had generated strong resentment across the region.

The JAAC said it had boycotted the negotiation process in protest against Mr Majeed's inclusion in the PML-N and urged the prime minister to take personal interest in the matter, hold the local PML-N leadership accountable, and reconsider the party's decision to induct what it described as an individual responsible for killing peaceful demonstrators.

WORKERS in Lahore prepare kite strings in accordance with new regulations for the Basant festival, set to return to the city next month after a ban of nearly two decades.—Murtaza Ali

Basant 'safety plan' submitted to Lahore High Court

• Provincial capital divided into red, yellow and green zones based on 10 years of kite-flying incident data • Festival scheduled for Feb 6-8 with 24/7 monitoring via Safe City cameras and drones

By Wajih Ahmad Sheikh

LAHORE: A "Safe Basant Security Plan" submitted to the Lahore High Court reveals that the provincial metropolis has been divided into three zones — red (high risk), yellow (medium risk), and green (low risk) — based on an analysis of kite-flying-related incidents over the past 10 years.

A report filed on behalf of the Punjab Inspector General of Police (IGP) outlines stringent measures for the upcoming Basant festival, scheduled to be held from February 6 to 8 in the city.

Under the plan, kite-flying zones will remain under 24/7 surveillance through Safe City cameras and drone monitoring.

According to the report, 48 road safety camps will be established in red zone areas, including the Walled City, Mall Road, Lakshmi Chowk, Mughalpura, Harbanspura, Shimla Hill, Dharampura, Shadman, Nishtar Colony, Multan Chungi and Defence.

The yellow zone will have safety camps at 32 locations, including MAO College Chowk, Ichra, Qartaba Chowk, Dubai Chowk, Barkat Market, Bhatta Chowk, Saddar, Askari-10, and Allah Hoo Chowk.

A total of 20 safety camps will be set up in green-zone areas, including Liberty Chowk, Wateen Chowk, Gajju Matta, Gulberg, and Bhobtian Chowk.

The report states that kite-flying hotspots have been identified using data collected over the past decade. These include the Walled City, Band Road, Canal Road, Ferozepur Road, DHA Society Road, Ring Road, Misri Shah, Shalimar Link Road, and Jail Road.

It adds that every kite and pinna (string ball) must carry a mandatory QR code or barcode for registration, enabling law enforcement agencies to trace illegal manufacturers and sellers.

Motorcyclists will be barred from entering red zones without helmets or unless their motorcycles are equipped with protective safety wires or antennas to prevent neck injuries from stray strings.

Police personnel will assist traffic police in installing neck-safety wires and ensuring helmet compliance.

Auto-rickshaws will be booked through ride-hailing applications, while the government will provide 5,000 rickshaws offering free rides across Lahore during the Basant days.

Only approved cotton-based pinna strings will be permitted. The use of nylon, metallic wire, or chemical-coated (manjha) strings will lead to immediate arrest and non-bailable charges, the report says.

The plan also bans aerial firing and the consumption of alcohol on rooftops during the festival.

Police teams will conduct flag marches, rooftop inspections, and deploy pickets throughout the three-day Basant festival.

The report further states that police will coordinate with the district administration and Rescue-1122 to provide first aid services, and with Lahore Electric Supply Company (Lesco) to ensure power-line safety and prevent electrocution incidents.

It also confirms that the manufacturing and sale of kites may begin only from February 1 for registered vendors, while the sale of charkhis (spools) will remain completely banned to prevent the use of chemical twine.

A similar report has been filed on behalf of the Capital City Police Officer.

These reports were submitted in response to a petition pending before the LHC regarding security and safety arrangements for the upcoming Basant event.

The Judicial Activism Panel filed the petition, questioning the alleged failure of the government and police to make adequate security arrangements.

Non-bailable warrants for Imaan, Hadi reissued in Peca case

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: A district and sessions court on Saturday reissued non-bailable arrest warrants against lawyer and activist Imaan Zainab Mazari-Hazir and her husband, Hadi Ali Chattha, for repeatedly remaining absent from trial proceedings in a controversial social media posts case registered under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (Peca), 2016.

According to certified copies of court orders dated Jan 17, Additional District and Sessions Judge Muhammad Afzal Majoka, presiding over the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Court (Islamabad-West), noted that the warrants issued against the accused could not be executed despite repeated attempts by law enforcement agencies and the National Cyber Crimes Investigation Agency (NCCIA).

According to the FIR, registered at the NCCIA Cybercrime Reporting Centre, under Sections 9, 10, 11 and 26-A of Peca, the accused allegedly incited linguistic divisions through social media posts and created the impression that the armed forces were involved in terrorism.

The court proceedings on Saturday were conducted in three sittings at 9am, 12 noon and 2pm. At each stage, the accused remained absent.

NCCIA officials submitted reports stating that the non-bailable warrants had returned unexecuted, with NCCIA Assistant Director Imran Haider informing the court that the accused had intentionally concealed themselves to avoid arrest.

During the last sitting, defence counsel Riasat Ali Azad requested an adjournment until Monday, arguing that the accused had challenged the court's Jan 15 order cancelling their bail before the Islamabad High Court. The court accepted the request but ordered that fresh non-bailable warrants be issued.

Opp leader's appointment completed under NA speaker leadership: Tarar

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Federal Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar on Saturday said that consultations are held within the party, but the final decision rests with PML-N President Nawaz Sharif.

Speaking to the media at the Lahore High Court, Mr Tarar said the Constitution and the law clearly prescribe the procedure for the appointment of the opposition leader.

To a query about the alleged role of Nawaz Sharif in the appointment of the opposition leader in the National Assembly, he said the process for appointing Mehmood Khan Achakzai as opposition leader had been completed under the leadership of the speaker.

He said that Mr Achakzai is a seasoned politician and that Nawaz Sharif values his long-standing political associates.

The law minister said the issue of appointing the opposition leader in the Senate would also be resolved soon.

He said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had spoken about negotiations on the very day he took the oath of office, adding that the government had proposed setting aside other matters to focus on a "Charter of Economy."

To a query about meetings with incarcerated PTI founding chairman Imran Khan, the law minister said meetings in jail are a legal matter.

He said a convicted person is kept in prison to prevent participation in day-to-day political affairs.

"What is not possible directly cannot be done indirectly either," Mr Tarar asserted, adding that Supreme Court judgements also make it clear that a convicted person cannot run the country's politics.

He said it was beyond understanding why the opposition insists on consulting the PTI founder on every matter, adding that political affairs also have defined procedures.

Three permanent judges of IHC notified

Justices Azam, Asif and Inam may take oath tomorrow

By Malik Asad

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has notified the appointment of three additional judges of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) as permanent judges.

They are likely to take oath on Monday. The Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) on Jan 12 recommended the confirmation of these judges, and their oath-taking was planned for the following day. However, the ceremony was put on hold as President Asif Ali Zardari proceeded abroad and the notification could not be signed.

According to a notification issued by the Ministry of Law and Justice and to be published in the Gazette of Pakistan (Part-III), the president, in exercise of powers under Article 193 of the Constitution, appointed Justice Muhammad Azam Khan, Justice Muhammad Asif and Justice Raja Inaam Ameen Minhas as judges of the IHC with effect from the date they take oath of their offices. The notification was issued on Jan 17.

The appointments come against the backdrop of an internal judicial controversy that surfaced during the JCP proceedings. Senior puisne judge of the IHC, Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani, who is also a member of the JCP, had written a letter to IHC Chief Justice Sardar Mohammad Sarfraz Dogar and JCP Chairman Justice Yahya Afridi, opposing the confirmation of the three additional judges.

In his letter, Justice Kayani reportedly raised objections to the performance and competence of the judges under consideration.

Informed sources said that prior to writing the letter, Justice Kayani sought progress and performance reports of the additional judges from the IHC administration in his capacity as a JCP member. However, the record was not initially provided by the IHC and was later supplied by the JCP secretariat, following which the letter was written.

Sources said the JCP discussed both the contents of the letter and the issue of access to judicial performance records during its meeting. Justice Kayani also reiterated his objections during the meeting, reportedly terming his fellow judges "incompetent". However, the commission rejected the objections by an overwhelming majority.

According to sources, out of 17 JCP members, the three judges secured 13 votes each. Two Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) members were absent from the meeting, while Justice Munib Akhtar and Justice Kayani did not vote in favour of the confirmations.

Justice Khan and Justice Minhas were appointed as additional judges of the IHC on Jan 17 last year. Justice Asif was initially appointed as an additional judge of the Balochistan High Court on the same date but was later transferred to the IHC along with incumbent Chief Justice Dogar and Justice Khadim Hussain Soomro of the Sindh High Court.

Official data cited during the JCP proceedings shows that Justice Minhas topped the list in terms of case disposal during 2025, deciding 2,039 cases as a single bench. Justice Khan decided 1,841 cases, while Justice Asif disposed of 1,338 cases, figures that were also discussed during the confirmation process.

Talks only possible if other side realises excesses committed: Achakzai

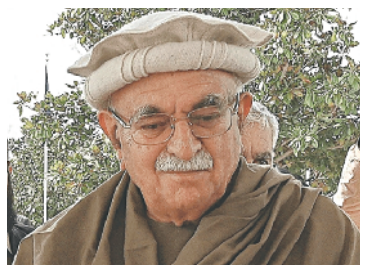
• Newly appointed NA opposition leader terms preventing Imran from meeting his family a violation of fundamental rights
• Urges political parties to decide whether 'voice of majority' or 'undemocratic forces' will be supreme

By Mohammad Hussain Khan

SANN (Jamshoro): The leader of the country's main opposition alliance believes that there can only be talks if the other side realises that excesses have been committed that need to be redressed.

Dawn caught up with Mehmood Khan Achakzai, the newly-appointed Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly, at the residence of Syed Zain Shah on Saturday, where he had arrived to attend the 122nd birth anniversary celebrations of G.M. Syed.

However, Mr Achakzai made it clear that he was speaking in his capacity as leader of the Tehreek Tahafuz Ayeen-i-Pakistan (TTAP) alliance.



MEHMOOD Khan Achakzai

"I haven't yet received the notification, that's why I will comment as TTAP leader," he said in response to a question about how he would manifest his role as the opposition leader in the assembly.

On the subject of possible talks with the rulers to defuse prevailing political tensions, Mr Achakzai said, "If someone has the realisation that excesses have been committed, then there is recourse and treatment too. Let's then talk."

The TTAP leader was adamant that denying Imran Khan's family access to him was a violation of fundamental rights, basic ethics, and humanity.

Questioned about Rana Sanaullah's claim that while PTI leaders want negotiations, but Mr Khan doesn't, Mr Achakzai posed a counter-question: "Talks on what issue? If someone robs the home of Saeen [Zain Shah] and loots everyone," he said, gesturing towards his surroundings, "then talks will be held [with the robbers] to recover the looted goods".

He said everyone knows it was Imran Khan who won the elections with a resounding majority, and the fact that the most popular leader in the country was not even being allowed to meet his family while in prison, was deplorable.

"A car can be invented, not a political leader. A leader emerges from amongst the masses," he said.

Talking about his bitter past with the incarcerated PTI founder, he said it was no longer an issue since he and MWM chief Raja Nasir Abbas had joined hands with Mr Khan when he was in trouble.

While his associates are being punished or offered bribes, "I am one of those jumping in to help people in trouble", he said.

Mr Achakzai urged major political parties to generate a consensus on a few crucial things — Pakistan being a federation; constitutional supremacy; parliament to serve as a bastion of power and to frame external and internal policies; people of federating units to have first right over their resources; and, respect for their languages and cultures.

"There should be talks whether Jamhoor (the people) will be supreme or the undemocratic forces," he opined. He said that Pakistan was a pluralist state where people's languages and cultures should be respected. Injustices engender hate and this leads to conflict, he said.

He was of the view that ever since the inception of Pakistan, civilian authority had not been allowed to establish itself.

On whether 26th and 27th Amendments served democracy, he said: "Many believe there has been constitutional demise in their wake. Two judges, who are supposed to interpret the Constitution, resigned. The judiciary's wings are clipped, journalism is banned. Now, parliament is no longer even a debating society. To date, nothing has been brought before parliament for debate."

He noted that a single individual could not handle the current situation. "Collective wisdom" could work.

"The TTAP was formed because we had foreseen then that this parliament [after the Feb 8 polls] will come after the Constitution, because everything is being done through the assembly," he said, recalling that after Gen Ayub Khan's martial law, parliament had passed a two-line resolution to forgive him for his crimes.